

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1331

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1352

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, MARR, NATO, PFOR, IC, NO, UK

SUBJECT: STATUS OF NORWEGIAN PROPOSAL ON COD WAR

REFS: (A) OSLO 1221, (B) OSLO 1163, (C) REYKJAVIK 0356,

(D) COPENHAGEN 0803

1. I MET AFTERNOON MARCH 17 WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND TO LEARN LATEST DEVELOPMENTS NORWEGIAN EFFORTS IN UK-ICELANDIC FISHERIES DISPUTE.

2. FRYDENLUND SAID HE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH BOTH UK AND ICELANDERS. AMONG OTHERS, FRYDENLUND FOUND OCCASION TO MEET MARCH 15 WITH GROUP OF ICELANDERS, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, WHO WERE PASSING THROUGH OSLO ENROUTE TO BRUSSELS ON ROUTINE VISIT. ICELANDERS, HE SAID, HAVE MET TWICE IN CABINET SESSIONS ON ISSUE THIS WEEK. HE WILL NOT BE SURPRISED IF THEY COME FORWARD WITH SOMETHING SOON, POSSIBLY BEFORE MARCH 23. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THEY WOULD COME FORWARD WITH NOR IN WHICH FORUM THEY WOULD SURFACE ANY PROPOSAL BUT THEY UNDERSTAND THEY MUST OFFER A FIRM PROPOSAL. FRYDENLUND SAID HALLGRIMSSON BELIEVES IT ESSENTIAL THAT ANY NEGOTIATION OS ISSUE SHOULD STEER AWAY FROM USE OF TONNAGE FIGURE AND FOCUS ON USE OF NUMBER OF BOATS INVOLVED IN FISHING.

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3. BRITISH HAVE MADE IT CLEAR TO NORWEGIANS THAT THEY THINK TOO MANY CHANNELS HAVE BEEN USED TO PROMOTE DISCUSSIONS, AND THEY HAVE TOLD NORWEGIANS THEY WANT TO USE THEM AS ONLY CHANNEL. THE NORWEGIANS HAVE INFORMED THE ICELANDERS OF THIS. FRYDENLUND SAID IT IS IMPORTANT FROM HIS VIEWPOINT TO EMPLOY NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND NOT REPEAT NOT HIM PERSONALLY AS THE CHANNEL. WHILE HE IS DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND ON THE LINE TO ICELANDERS HE IS USING HIS AMBASSADOR IN ICELAND AS HIS MAIN CONTACT WITH THEM. HE HAS INSTRUCTED THE AMBASSADOR TO KEEP CLOSE CONTACT NOT ONLY WITH HALLGRIMSSON BUT ALSO WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON.

4. FRYDENLUND SAID THAT WHILE DANES WERE ACTIVE IN FORWARDING DISCUSSIONS DURING NORDIC COUNCIL MEETING IN COPENHAGEN, THEY HAVE INFORMED HIM THAT BECAUSE OF SPECIAL NATURE OF NORWEGIAN-ICELANDIC RELATIONSHIP DANES NO LONGER WOULD INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN PROMOTING NEGOTIATIONS. THEY SAID THEY CONSIDERED NORWEGIANS TO BE PROPER CHANNEL. REFERRING TO POSSIBLE CONFUSION OF CHANNELS, FRYDENLUND MENTIONED A PROPOSAL MADE BY BRITISH MP NAMED PRESCOTT TO ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL IN STRASBOURG. PROPOSAL INVOLVED 5,000 TON MONTHLY CATCH, AND PRESCOTT APPARENTLY GAVE IMPRESSION THAT UK FOREIGN MINISTER CALLAGHAN AGREED TO PROPOSAL. UK REPRESENTATIVE WHO IS STILL RESIDENT IN REYKJAVIK SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THIS PROPOSAL HAD ANY STANDING. FRYDENLUND BELIEVES SAME (HE SAID IN FACT SOME ICELANDERS MAY BE USING IT AS A RED HERRING), AND THINKS HALLGRIMSSON UNDERSTANDS THIS IS NOT REAL PROPOSAL. HOWEVER, HALLGRIMSSON'S PRIVATE SECRETARY INFORMED NORWEGIANS THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS ON ICELANDIC CABINET AGENDA FOR CONSIDERATION. THIS COULD BE PROPOSAL REFERRED TO IN REYKJAVIK 0356, PARA 5. NORWEGIANS PROFESSED NOT TO KNOW WHAT CANADIAN AMBASSADOR MCILWRAITH WAS UP TO (REYKJAVIK 0356) EXCEPT THAT HE WENT TO REYKJAVIK FROM LONDON.

5. FRYDELUND SAID HE HAD HEARD FROM REYKJAVIK THAT AMBASSADOR IRVING HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY ICELANDERS TO INVOLVE US TO MEDIATE DISPUTE. I SAID TO MY KNOWLEDGE THIS WAS NOT THE CASE AND THAT WE LOOK TO FRYDENLUND AS THE PRINCIPAL CHANNEL FOR PROMOTING NEGOTIATIONS. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD WE HAD BEEN ASKED IN WASHINGTON TO GIVE ICELANDERS SUPPORT AND WE HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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MAINTAINED OUR STRONG DESIRE TO SEE A SETTLEMENT ACHIEVED WHILE REMAINING NEUTRAL IN THE DISPUTE.

6. WE DISCUSSED POTENTIAL IMPACT UPCOMING CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP IN UK MIGHT HAVE ON MATTER. FRYDENLUND SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FROM HERE TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS ON POSSIBLE EFFECT OF CHANGE. BYRNE

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